There’s just one week left until Frontier Conference basketball teams finally get to start beating on each other.

Each and every season, the Frontier is a war of attrition. With so many good teams on both the men’s and women’s side, it’s generally a race to see who will outlast the rest come March.

And so far, 2010 has shown that’s exactly what might happen when the Frontier season gets here next week.

Looking at the first half of the men’s season, league favorite Westminster College has posted an 11-1 record heading into the final week of nonconference play, with the Griffins’ only loss coming at the hands of Azusa Pacific. That’s the same team MSU-Northern lost to just one week ago.

And while the Lights (8-4) may not have a perfect nonconference record this season, they certainly played perhaps the toughest non-league schedule of any Frontier team. Of Northern’s four losses, three are to ranked NAIA teams, including a one-point setback to the NAIA’s top-ranked team, Robert Morris of Illinois.

UM-Western picked up right where it left off last year. The Bulldogs went to the NAIA tourney a year ago, and are at 8-3 coming into this week. Also at 8-3 is LC State. The Warriors have also played a brutal non-league schedule and might just be the Frontier’s most-improved team. UGF is also on the rise. The Argos are at 6-6 so far this season, while Rocky Mountain College (6-8) and Montana Tech (1-10) have struggled.

On the women’s side, third-ranked Lewis-Clark State looks to be a juggernaut this season. The Warriors are 11-1 on the year, while travel partner Westminster College isn’t far behind. The Griffins (12-2) are ranked 11th in the NAIA this week, while Carroll College (11-3) slipped into the Top 25 at No. 24, showing that the league’s heavyweights are going to be very tough to topple in 2011.

MSU-N (7-6) has reeled off four straight wins to get over .500 despite a rigorous road schedule. The Skylights have three more non-league games, all coming later this week in Las Vegas. Northern has endured plenty of injuries this season, starting the year without sophomore center Laci Keller, than losing senior point guard Taylor Keller to injury. But MSU-N has also showed signs of what the Skylights could be in league play, and with the schedule they’ve played, there’s no question Northern will be ready to go next week.

Montana Tech is also off to a strong start, and with a veteran team returning this season, the Orediggers are at 9-4 as league play approaches. Rocky Mountain College is 7-6 on the season, while UM-Western (4-8) and UGF (3-7) have struggled a bit.

The Frontier Conference men’s and women’s basketball season officially gets underway Jan. 6-8. The Lights and Skylights open their season Jan. 8 at UGF.

The Lights are at home this week to close out non-league play with two games in the AmericInn Classic. Northern hosts NAIA DII power Black Hills State at 6 p.m. on Wednesday night and Lethbridge University at 6 p.m. on Thursday night. Montana Tech will also play both the Yellowjackets and Pronghonors at 4 p.m. each day at the MSU-Northern Fieldhouse.
The Skylights play games in Las Vegas Wednesday-Friday.